



Whitley County Sheriff's Sgt.
Kirk Mays
KELLY FOREMAN | PROGRAM COORDINATOR

A single father of four — with a fifth expected this June — Whitley County Sheriff's Sgt. Kirk Mays is committed to making his family's community the best it can be. In southeastern Kentucky, one way Mays is doing that is by focusing his efforts on getting impaired drivers and methamphetamine off the streets. Mays, 41, has served the tri-county area since 2008, working for the Corbin Police Department and Laurel County Sheriff's Office before joining WCSO in January 2013. After 39 years in the community, it's both his duty and honor to serve, he said.

I had been working at the fire department for a while, and I did some ride time with a Laurel County sheriff's deputy. Once I started doing that, I really got interested in law enforcement. It just got in my blood and I really wanted to do it. I went to Corbin and went through their hiring process.

It's interesting working here. There's a lot of drug activity — a lot of meth. But there also are a lot of good, hometown people. But the drug activity really has taken over, and it's gotten a diverse group of people. There are good people who just got caught up in the wrong thing at the wrong time and now are selling drugs. It's a major problem.

Being able to take care of my community and show people there is a better life out there is important to me. I'm out there to help clean up the epidemic of drugs, help make a better community — to get it back to what it used to be in the old days. We definitely are fighting a war against drugs, and we are not going to put up with it.

I'm the sergeant on second shift, so I do a little bit of everything. I work a lot of narcotics and DUIs, but I also patrol and pretty much do it all.

I got promoted to sergeant in September, so I'm looking forward to going to the Academy of Police Supervision next year. Respect is one of the big things I teach as a supervisor.

“*It's just one of my pet peeves — if I can get an impaired driver off the road, I feel like that's one of my biggest accomplishments.*”

Respect the community, and you'll get respect back — for the most part. When I first started out as an officer, I was more gung ho and I wanted to go and do everything. I wanted to show people that we were going to police this community. Now, especially with the new guys coming out of the academy, I tell the other officers all the time that you have to treat people with respect. It wasn't that I didn't respect people when I started, I just wanted to clean up the problem. But I learned the people we arrest are no different than we are. So I tell everyone they will get more out of people with respect than if they try to break them down or are mean to them.

One of the biggest challenges I see is our justice system. It's hard to take a driver who is under the influence off the streets, or take drugs off the streets, and because of our system, they turn around and are right back out there. I'm sure jails are full all over, but it really is aggravating that it seems like nothing really happens to them.

I have four kids — one who is 15, a 12 year old, 8 year old and an 11 month old. I have one on the way who will be here in June. I stay quite busy. I work two jobs, so I'm all the time on the go. In addition to the sheriff's office, I also work at Paul Steely Ford as a detail person, part time.

Trust me, it ain't easy. The car dealership works great with my schedule when I

have to take off for court. And I'm off on Mondays and Tuesdays and get my kids every other weekend. It's a balance job, but I do it. My kids love that I'm a cop. They're all the time bragging to their friends that their dad is the police.

For the past five years, I have received several awards for my work on arresting impaired drivers. That's a big deal to me, clearing them off the roadway. I also became a meth lab technician. There are several cases I could talk about, but basically, DUIs and meth are both big issues to me and I have zero tolerance for it. It's just one of my pet peeves — if I can get an impaired driver off the road, I feel like that's one of my biggest accomplishments.

My kids are growing up in this world now. Drugs here are so bad and I want to teach them the right way — show them there still is some good out there. I talk to them about what drugs actually do to people, and the older ones, I have shown them pictures of what people looked like in the beginning and what they look like after a life on drugs. They have heard me talk about accidents with impaired drivers and they know what can happen to them. I want to make our community safer for everyone's kids. 🐾

Kelly Foreman can be reached at kelly.foreman@ky.gov or (859) 622-8552.